

Attributes of People's Organisations and the Institutional Viability of Selected Community-Based Forest Management Projects in Northern Luzon

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An assessment was made of the attributes of People's Organisations (POs) and of the institutional viability of Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) programs in three project sites in the Philippines. In CBFM, the capacity of People's Organisations, as *de facto* managers of forest resources, is being developed by non-government organisations under the guidance of local government units (LGUs) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). A survey was conducted of community members (case informants) and members of the various agencies (key informants) to ascertain the characteristics of successful POs and the relationship between these characteristics and the viability of CBFM. Although commendable contributions have been made to the forest management capability of POs, their standard of living and environmental conditions, there are also many instances in which institutional conflict among stakeholders is apparent. The great challenge for the various stakeholders is to orchestrate their differing interests so as to address successfully the critical issues of the low socio-economic status of PO members, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability of the organisations involved, loss of interest of PO members in project activities, lack of technical assistance, loss of credibility of the DENR, and lack of equitable benefit sharing.

Keywords: Community organisations, livelihood projects, leadership, habituation, typification.

INTRODUCTION

The DENR is the implementing agency for the Community-Based Forest Management Program (CBFMP) which is an element of the Philippine's strategies for sustainable development. The program is based on the premise that local communities develop a stake in forest resources and will be motivated to protect and manage these resources when they are organised, trained, equipped, empowered and

provided with security of tenure over public forestlands. CBFM integrates and unifies people-oriented forestry activities, and focuses on security of tenure, social equity, DENR and LGU partnerships, generation of investment capital, and market linkages. The history and current institutional arrangements of community forestry programs in the Philippines have been discussed by Harrison *et al.* (2004) and Emtage (2004), and will not be elaborated on here. This paper reports on a survey-based study conducted in three model project sites in the Cagayan Valley (Philippines Region 2), the specific objectives of the study being to:

1. characterise the people's organisations involved in the implementation of CBFM;
2. assess the factors and strategies influencing PO attributes in relation to the institutional viability of CBFM;
3. analyse the influences of PO attributes on the institutional viability of CBFM; and
4. determine the implications of the program implementation policies for a more effective and efficient institutionalisation of CBFM.

The conceptual framework underlying the research is first outlined, followed by a description of the three sites. The research method is then described, including profiles of respondents and performance indicators for the COs. Research findings are reported in subsequent sections. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and concluding comments.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study of the attributes of POs and the institutional viability of CBFM fits within the criteria of systems theory (Achoff, 1972, Liliensfeldt, 1973, and Chuchman, 1983, as cited by Esteban, 1996), which likens human organisations to biological organisms that live, grow and develop. Figure 1 summarises the conceptual model guiding the analysis. It illustrates the relationship between the attributes of POs, the degree to which they help institutionalise CBFMs, and the institutional viability of CBFMs. It is hypothesised that the attributes of POs in terms of their behaviour, linkages and participation, directly influence the degree of institutionalisation. It is further hypothesised that a PO's level of institutionalisation, in terms of its shared goals, internalisation, expediency, habitualisation and typification, directly affects the institutional viability of their CBFM project.¹

¹ *Internalisation* concerns the degree to which adoption of CBFMP as a new form of institution is internalised by the PO members as their goal and as an integral and unquestioned part of life meanings and systems. *Habitualisation* concerns the condition by which PO members who adopt CBFMP are able to influence other individuals as manifested by the spontaneous adoption and spread over the community despite being unaware of or not accepting the goal. *Typification* is defined as the degree of institutionalisation by which adoption is not only patterned by individuals but by communities, and is thus no longer a shared goal but rather a shared action.

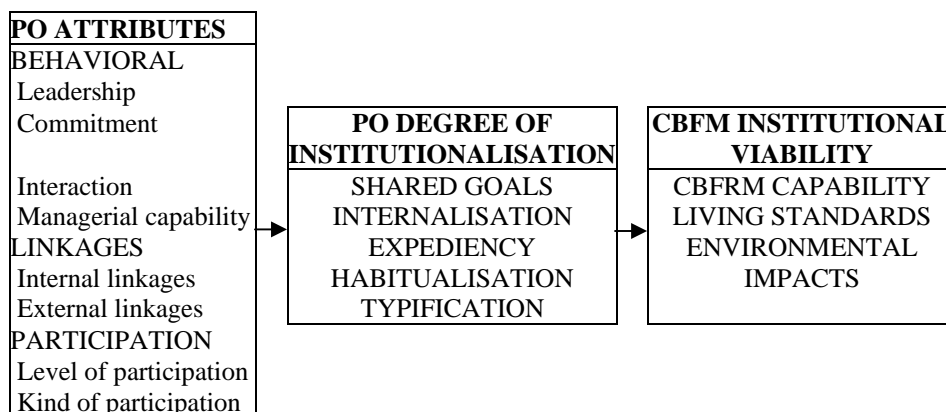


Figure 1. Conceptual model illustrating relationship between POs' contributions to the institutionalisation and institutional viability of CBFM

RESEARCH SITES

Three case study sites were chosen in Cagayan Valley, in northern Luzon (Philippines Region 2):

- 1) *Quibal* Multi-purpose Cooperative Incorporated (QMPCI), Quibal, Penablanca, Cagayan Province;
- 2) *Salingdingan* Multi-purpose Cooperative Incorporated (SMPCI), Salingdingan, Ilagan, Isabela Province; and
- 3) *VIBANARA* Multi-purpose Cooperative Incorporated (VMPCI), Rangayan, Ilagan, Isabela Province.

These sites were selected as representing a range of projects, but are not necessarily representative of the 814 people-oriented projects (existing or discontinued) in the Cagayan Valley. A brief description of each follows².

Quibal CBFM-CFP Project

This is a Community Forestry Project launched in October 1991, as the first of the six pilot projects to operate in Region 2. It covers an area of 4170 ha and aimed to replace kaingin farming with progressive agroforestry practices. It was planned that products from the project would be used in community development activities and for livelihood projects such as a mini-bakery, backyard fish culture, backyard poultry, sari-sari store, firewood gathering under permit, and pilot log extraction. The project includes 1000 ha targeted for comprehensive site development with areas for reforestation, timber stand improvement, assisted natural regeneration) and agroforestry. Initial membership of 56 reached a peak of more than 500 members during 1990 to 1994. However, only one-third of the targeted area was actually

² A comprehensive description of each site is contained in the author's PhD thesis (Tarun-Acay 2004) from which this paper is drawn.

developed during the period of 1992 to 1995 and the PO was inactive at the time the study was conducted in 2000.

Salingdingan CPEU Project

This was originally an Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) project in the Province of Isabel, and was retained by the DENR as a demonstration site. Established in 1989, it covers a logged area of 178 ha between barangay Salindingan³ and Gayong-gayong Sur. The project was registered as the Salingdingan ISF Multi-Purpose Cooperative Inc., Certificates of Stewardship (CSs) being issued to 83 farmer-participants. The CSs allowed participants to cultivate a maximum of 70% of the awarded land for agricultural crops but required them to develop the remainder for forestry. At the time of the survey, only three members had maintained their plantations.

VIBANARA CBFM-CFP Project

This project has an area of about 10,220 ha and is situated within the barangays of Villa Imelda, Batong Labang, Nanaguan and Rang-ayan. The area is managed by the VIBANARA⁴ Multi-Purpose Cooperative Inc. (VMPCI), which has a membership of 322 households. VIBANARA conducted timber harvesting operations, forest protection and livelihood projects. The latter included a cooperative store, piggery, goat raising and corn production. In the process, a bank loan of almost PhP400,000⁵ was accumulated. Funding by the ADB Comprehensive Site Development (CSD) Contract enabled the PO to complete a 815 ha forest rehabilitation project consisting of a timber, rattan and agroforestry plantation. Individual stakes are now recognised in CBFM sites by means of contracts under individual property rights (IPR) agreements granted to 15 VIBANARA members for agroforestry areas.

RESEARCH METHOD

CBFM encompasses an ideology of emancipation, empowerment, equity, liberty, participation and social justice. In this context, most of the primary data gathered in the study relates to 'soft' technologies, including the social and institutional aspects of forest management, community participation, institutional and organisational context, financial incentive structures, and arrangements regarding how and by whom decisions will be made (following Porio, 1995). Primary and secondary data, both quantitative and qualitative, were gathered and analysed under the criticalist research approach, which is characterised as being socially critical, openly ideological, overtly political, and oriented towards achieving emancipation.

The units of analysis and the source of *primary data*, were 31 *key informants* (heads or representatives from DENR, LGUs, NGOs and POs), and 27 *case informants* as individual members of the POs and beneficiaries of the CBFM program.

³ A barangay is the smallest unit of local government in the Philippines.

⁴ The acronym is formed from the first two letters of the name of each of the four barangays.

⁵ US\$1.00 is equivalent to approximately 50 PhP (Philippino pesos).

The primary data gathering technique adopted the triangulation method so that the important variations could be captured accurately in the data gathering process. This included: 1) participant observation; 2) structured interviewing; 3) focus group discussions; and 4) analysis of field records. Two experienced field assistants and two local research aides were employed, and data collection took place through intermittent rural immersion from November 1999 to March 2000, with sporadic follow-up until July 2002.

Most of the information was obtained through a survey using a structured questionnaire which sought responses to a series of Likert scale questions. Perceptions were sought on PO accomplishments under funded projects, the external funding phase being the period when each group contributed most to the institutionalisation of CBFM in the region. Informants also participated in a focus group interview, and some who were not able to join the focus group interview were interviewed individually. Focus group and individual interviews were recorded using video cameras, observations and notes, and were used for cross validation of the informants' responses to the questionnaire. Indicators, as listed in Figure 1, were derived for:

- four concepts under PO attributes (with eight variables);
- five concepts about the PO degree of institutionalisation; and
- three concepts relating to CBFM institutional viability.

Secondary data were sourced from DENR Field Office management records and other documents. The information was supplemented with unobtrusive researcher observation and informal discussions with non-PO members from government offices and the private sector.

PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents from the three study sites were mostly females (59%), 56% were between 31 and 45 years of age, and 89% were married. The dialects spoken were Ilocano and Itawit (both about 41%). Most respondents (52%) had a household size of less than 5. All respondents from Quibal were indigenous, respondents in Salingdingan were all migrants, and VIBANARA had a mixture of original residents (63%) and migrants (37%). Selected demographic and economic data are presented in Table 1.

Self-assessment of motivations showed that the respondents in all areas joined the CBFM project for reasons of economic security, belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation.⁶ They were motivated by the assisting organisations, including the DENR, NGOs, LGU officials, and other PO members, as well as being self-motivated.

In terms of the status of their land tenure, most respondents were owner-cultivators, while 18.5% were landless and highly dependent on forest resources for

⁶ Self-actualisation is the highest level of motivation. It is a point where an individual feels the need to grow, feel fulfilled and realise their potential.

subsistence. Share-tenancy is still practiced at a 70:30 sharing between landowner and tenant among one third of the respondents.⁷ Farm sizes ranged from 0.5 to 9 ha with an average of 1 ha and with about 41% of farms having between 1 and 2 ha. There was a low degree of fragmentation in all study areas, 82% of respondents operating only one land parcel. About 36% of respondents had acquired their land by application to the Bureau of Lands. The main source of income was farming (81.5%), with the mean annual income PhP20,925 and the modal annual income class of PhP10,000 to PhP20,000.

Table 1. Selected demographic and economic characteristics of the case informants

Characteristic	QMPCI		SMPCI		VMPCI		TOTAL	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Status of Land Tenure								
Owner-cultivator	5	41.7	4	100	4	66.7	13	59.1
Share-owner	4	33.3	-	-	1	16.7	5	22.7
Share-tenant	1	8.3	-	-	1	16.7	2	9.1
Owner-lessor	2		-	-	-		2	9.1
Farm size								
Less than 1.0 ha.	5	41.7	-	-	-	-	5	22.7
1.1-2.0 ha.	5	41.7	-	-	4	66.7	9	40.9
2.1-3.0 ha.	2	16.7	3	75	-		5	22.7
3.1 ha. and above	-	-	1	25	2	33.3	3	13.6
Land acquisition								
Lands Bureau	4	33.3	3	75	1	16.7	8	36.4
Purchased	4	33.3	1	25	1	16.7	6	27.3
Inheritance/clan	3	25	-	-	2	33.3	5	22.7
A & D but untitled					2	33.3	2	9.1
Leaseholder	1	8.3					1	4.5
Sources of income^a								
Farming	12	92	4	100	6	60	22	81.5
Piggery, poultry	8	62	1	25	-	-	9	33.3
Firewood gathering	3	23	1	25	-	-	4	14.8
Coop employee					3	30	3	11.1
Carpentry	2	15	-	-	-	-	2	7.4
Labourer					1	10	1	3.7
Tricycle driving	1	8	-	-	-	-	1	3.7
Annual household income								
Below 10,000 PhP	4	31	-	-	1	10	5	18.5
10,001-20,000 PhP	7	54	3	75	3	30	13	48.2
20,001-30,000 PhP	1	8	-	-	3	30	4	14.8
30,001-40,000 PhP	-	-	-	-	1	10	1	3.7
Above 40,000 PhP	1	8	1	25	2	20	4	14.8

^a Multiple responses

⁷ In this income sharing scheme, the land owner receives 70% and the cultivator/tenant 30%. The implementation of the Agrarian Reform Program under the Marcos Regime attempted to provide farmers relief from this scheme but the study reveals that it still exists.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Leadership Characteristics of the POs

Leadership can be categorised under two broad headings, traditional and emerging.

Traditional leadership arises from historical, political and social circumstances. Members perceived three possible bases of traditional leadership in the POs: the economically and politically powerful elite; the non-elite or ordinary people in the locality, and the 'wise or anointed', these being ordinary people who are viewed as 'crafty' in making choices, decisions and judgments. Table 2 shows the PO's perceptions of traditional leadership in the three study sites.

Table 2. Perceived type of traditional leadership in POs

Type	QMPCI (n=13)		SMPCI (n=4)		VMPCI (n=10)		TOTAL (n=27)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Elite	9	69	-	-	-	-	9	33
Non-elite	4	31	4	100	9	90	17	63
'Wise/anointed'	-	-	4	100	1	10	5	19

Emerging leadership is with a feature of the new generation of leaders under evolving social structures. Trends in emerging leadership are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Perceived type of emerging leadership in POs

Type	QMPCI (n=13)		SMPCI (n=4)		VMPCI (n=10)		TOTAL (n=27)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Elite (men)	1	8	4	100	-	-	5	18.52
Non-elite								
Men	1	8	-	-	-	-	1	3.70
Women	1	8	-	-	1	10	2	7.41
Youth	-	-	-	-	4	40	4	14.81
Wise/anointed	-	-	-	-	1	10	1	3.70
No response	10	76	-	-	4	40	14	51.85

Form, Quality and Extent of Leadership

Ratings of these attributes are based on the informants' perceptions of project activities during the second chairmanship of the project sites, the most active and effective stage. The overall rating of the POs for the attributes relating to the institutionalisation of CBFM was generally very good/highly democratic (Table 4).

Table 4. Perceived form, quality and extent of leadership in POs

Leadership	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by category
Form of leadership	3.04	3.34	3.03	3.08	Highly democratic
Quality of leadership	3.26	3.03	3.24	3.22	Very good
Extent of leadership	3.30	3.25	3.39	3.32	Very good
Overall mean	3.20	3.21	3.22	3.21	Very good/ highly democratic
Overall PO rating	Very good	Very good	Very good		

Form of leadership was rated on the following continuum: poor (≤ 1.0) for an autocratic form of leadership, fair (1.1-2.0) for semi-autocratic, good (2.1-3.0) democratic, very good (3.1-4.0) for highly democratic, and excellent (4.1-5.0) for a participatory form of leadership. Form of leadership was uniformly rated as being 'highly democratic'.

Quality of leadership refers to the breadth and balance of the leaders' focus. The quality of leadership was rated 'very good' in all three study sites.

Extent of leadership services rendered was also rated as 'very good' in all of the study sites. The term addresses activities such as calling, organising and presiding over meetings, initiating decision and policy-making, implementation of project activities, solving problems within the community, internal and external linkages, settling interpersonal conflicts among members, and bringing community problems to the attention of government officials.

Commitment of the Members to POs

Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. The overall mean rating was 4.42 (Table 5) with VIBANARA having the highest mean rating of 4.94. *Continued commitment* refers to the degree of attachment to the project compared to the perceived costs of leaving the organisation. In Quibal and Salingdingan this was rated fair, while in VIBANARA it scored a high rating. Adherence to POs was generally a moral or *normative commitment* (Table 5) – members joined the organisation because they felt they ought to.

Table 5. Perceived commitment to POs

Commitment	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by category
Affective	3.95	4.66	4.94	4.42	High
Continuance	3.79	3.28	4.53	3.99	Fair
Normative	4.09	3.72	4.36	4.13	Fair
Overall mean	3.94	3.89	4.61	4.15	Fair
Overall PO rating	Fair	Fair	High	Fair	

Rating scale: very low (≤ 1.4), low (1.5-2.8), fair (2.9-4.2), high (4.3-5.6) and very high (5.7-7).

Interaction within POs

Table 6 shows that perceptions of *interaction* among members and officers were generally good. However, the researcher noted that in parallel with positive practices, there were also many instances of interaction both within POs and between POs and other organisations.

Table 6. PO's perceived interaction

Interaction	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by category
Officers to members	2.92	3.50	3.30	3.15	Very Good
Members to officers	2.38	2.25	2.70	2.48	Good
Among members	2.23	1.50	2.80	2.37	Good
Among officers	2.31	3.00	2.40	2.44	Good
Grand mean	2.46	2.56	2.80	2.61	Good
Overall PO rating	Good	Good	Good	Good	

Rating scale: poor (≤ 1.0), fair (1.1-2.0), good (2.1-3.0), very good (3.1-4.0) and excellent (4.1-5.0).

Managerial Capability of POs

Managerial capability existing in the POs was perceived as very high at Quibal and VIBANARA and high at Salingdingan (Table 7). The high overall rating for VIBANARA can be attributed to training obtained during their project's capability building activities.

Table 7. Perceived managerial capability in POs

Aspect	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Grand mean	Overall rating by category
Organisational management	3.23	3.25	3.10	3.19	Very capable
Financial and business management	2.92	1.00	3.20	2.74	Capable
Comprehensive site development planning	2.46	1.00	3.40	2.59	Capable
Comprehensive site development implementation	3.54	2.75	3.70	3.48	Very capable
Project assessment monitoring and evaluation	3.15	3.00	3.60	3.30	Very capable
Grand mean	3.06	2.20	3.40	3.06	Capable
Overall PO rating	Very Capable	Capable	Very Capable		

Rating scale: not capable (≤ 1.0), fairly capable, (1.1-2.0), capable (2.1-3.0), very capable (3.1-4.0) and highly capable (4.1-5.0).

Despite the positive evaluations of the managerial abilities in POs, there is much anecdotal evidence to the contrary. For instance, at VIBANARA, many livelihood and agricultural business ventures did not last long because inputs were lacking or because they were not a high priority to the members and the community. Goat and pig dispersal projects did not succeed because the environmental conditions are not suitable and project beneficiaries lacked skills in raising hybrid goats. Others did not accept the livelihood project because of suspicion that they were being exploited by the leaders. In Quibal, only 68 ha of comprehensive site development had taken place (during 1997-1999) although 872 ha had been developed in Phase I (1993-1995). The low output was due to cheating by labourers in recording the times they worked and wastage of planting materials because of poor monitoring. The poultry, bakery and sari-sari store ventures did not prosper due to lack of management skills, and although members had been trained in the art of rattan craft-making, they still lacked marketing skills. Salingdingan's most significant accomplishment was the parcelisation of a 178 ha area of logged-over forest to 83 members to enable the establishment of tree plantations, fruit orchards, hedgerow plantations, fire breaks, fishponds and corn farms. However, an illustration of deficiencies in management was their inability to pay installments on loans for two tractors. This led to repossession and loss of about Php200,000.

Internal and External Linkages of POs

PO's *internal linkages* refers to their relationship to local organisations including the barangay council, the Sangguniang Kabataan⁸ and the Barangay Health Centre. PO linkage within the community was moderate for Salingdingan and VIBANARA but low for Quibal (Table 8).

External linkages for the POs were strongest with DENR and the Cooperative Development Authority. These linkages were instrumental in the capability building of the POs, and PO linkages to other agencies for financial, enterprise and marketing support.

Table 8. PO's perceived linkages

Linkage	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by category
Local organisations	1.87	1.88	2.33	2.04	Moderate
Government organisations	2.42	3.10	2.94	2.71	Moderate
Non-government organisations	2.10	1.00	3.57	2.48	Moderate
Private sector	1.15	3.13	2.10	1.80	Low
Overall mean	1.88	2.28	2.73	2.30	Moderate
Overall PO rating	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	

Rating scale: very low (≤ 1.0 or 10-20%), low (1.1-2.0 or 21-40%), moderate (2.1-3.0 or 41-60%), strong (3.1-4.0 or 61-80%), and very strong (4.1-5.0 or 81-100%).

⁸ Sangguniang Kabataan is a political group for the youth. Kabataan means *youth* (citizens aged 21 years or less).

Kind and Level of Participation of POs

Table 9 summarises respondents' perceptions of the PO's participation in terms of material and financial services rendered and the sharing of benefits in various stages of the project cycle. Participation of the PO members during the *pre-planning stage* was generally fair (mean 2.06). The overall rating for the *planning stage* was good (mean 2.36) brought about by the active involvement of the elected officers in project area delineation, pre-membership and project management training.

Table 9. PO's perceived participation

Participation	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by category
Pre-planning	2.21	1.19	2.20	2.06	Fair
Planning	2.50	1.19	2.65	2.36	Good
Assessment	2.88	1.19	2.60	2.53	Good
Implementation	3.02	1.88	3.10	2.88	Good
Monitoring	2.69	1.81	3.15	2.73	Good
Evaluation	2.46	1.63	3.43	2.69	Good
Overall mean	2.63	1.48	2.85	2.32	Good
Overall PO rating	Good	Fair	Good	Good	

Rating scale: poor (≤ 1.0), fair (1.1-2.0), good (2.1-3.0), very good (3.1-4.0) and excellent (4.1-5.0).

The overall *assessment phase* was rated as good (mean 2.53). The *implementation phase* was accorded the highest mean rating, of very good for Quibal and VIBANARA, and fair for Salingdingan. It was during the implementation stage that the number of members increased. Nonetheless, equitable sharing of benefits at this stage became a problem in all three sites, with numerous examples of corruption and mismanagement. These incidents seemed to impinge on the POs' contribution to CBFM institutional viability (as measured in terms of CBFM capability, standard of living and environmental impact).

At the *monitoring stage*, Salingdingan rated fair (mean 1.81) compared to Quibal (2.69, good) and VIBANARA (3.15, very good). There was no formal monitoring system adopted in Salingdingan, with DENR representatives coming to monitor the project only during the peak of the implementation.

Evaluation ratings are similar to those for monitoring. VIBANARA respondents noted that active participation of the PO is needed during external evaluation, and claimed that there were discrepancies between the actual situation and the report of the DENR-organised evaluation. Several occasions of faulty reporting by DENR representatives were witnessed by the author.

INDICATORS OF THE DEGREE OF INSTITUTIONALISATION

The degree of institutionalisation of the POs was assessed with respect to changes in the community over the period of the project in terms of size and territoriality, and observed social behavior. Territoriality and size were the highest rated of these indicators, followed by shared capital (Table 10). The high rating indicates that

although the project and its resources may wane, the community will still persist while their capital exists in a registered cooperative.

Table 10. PO's degree of institutionalisation

Aspect	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by aspect
Size, time, territoriality	3.36	3.06	4.27	3.65	High
Shared goal	3.65	2.63	3.35	3.39	High
Internalisation	3.58	3.13	3.50	3.48	High
Expediency	3.62	3.25	3.75	3.61	High
Habitualisation	3.69	2.60	3.48	3.45	High
Typification	3.66	2.70	3.45	3.32	High
Overall mean	3.54	2.65	3.75	3.31	High
Overall PO rating	High (Habitualisation)	Medium (Expediency)	High (Habitualisation)	High (Habitualisation)	

Rating scale: very low (≤ 1.0 or 10-20%) corresponding to a shared goal level of institutionalisation, low (1.1-2.0 or 21-40%) for the level of internalisation, medium (2.1-3.0 or 41-60%) for the level of expediency, high (3.1-4.0 or 61-80%) for the level of habitualisation, and very high (4.1-5.0 or 81-100%) for the level of typification.

Changes in *size* (population, resources, activities), territoriality and length of time the project has been functional were ranked high for Quibal and Salingdingan (at the degree of habitualisation) while VIBANARA had a very high rating (at the degree of typification). The ratings were determined based on assessments of what the POs had at project commencement and what they had at the time of the study. The criteria include total number of members, capital resources, improvements in tenure, working permits, performance of the cooperative's office, forest protection, forest rehabilitation, harvesting, livelihood projects and multiplier effects. In terms of *shared goals*, Salingdingan was rated only medium while Quibal and VIBANARA were rated high. The *degree of internalisation* of CBFM was high for all three sites. The highest average level of institutionalisation for all sites was in expediency. This means that their contributions rendered were basically for economic reasons. The degree of *habitualisation* and *typification* of CBFM activities were high in Quibal and VIBANARA but only medium in Salingdingan.

INDICATORS OF INSTITUTIONAL VIABILITY

Institutional viability of CBFM pertains to the success of the project based on three pillars of sustainable development: social development (as indicated by the PO's CBFM capability); economic development (as indicated by the PO's standard of living), and environmental management (Table 11). Social viability (satisfying the needs of poor people for food, water, clothing, shelter, energy, jobs and health, and providing to all the opportunity for a better life) is considered the first and foremost goal to be attained. Salingdingan had partially achieved its objectives of CBFM

capability (a ranking of 2.91) while Quibal and VIBANARA were high achievers. Overall, capability building was highly achieved in all three sites.

Table 11. PO's perceived institutional viability

Institutional viability	QMPCI (n=13)	SMPCI (n=4)	VMPCI (n=10)	Overall mean	Overall rating by category
CBFRM capability	2.91	3.08	3.35	3.12	Highly achieved
Standard of living	3.32	3.56	3.16	3.30	Highly achieved
Environmental impact	3.24	3.25	3.35	3.28	Highly achieved
Overall mean	3.16	3.30	3.29	3.25	Highly achieved
Overall PO rating	Highly Achieved	Highly Achieved	Highly Achieved	Highly Achieved	

Rating scale: never achieved (≤ 1.0), slightly achieved (1.1-2.0), moderately achieved (2.1-3.0), highly achieved (3.1-4.0) and fully achieved (4.1-5.0).

A substantial improvement in the members' *standard of living* in all POs was noted with an overall rating of highly achieved. This improvements was manifested in: 1) number of livelihood projects established; 2) equity of contributions from the members; 3) equity in the distribution of benefits and services to members; 4) prestige in becoming a member of the organisation; 5) increase in income accrued from the project; 6) increase in sources of income from the project; and 7) improvement in infrastructure and market accessibility accrued from the organisation's initiatives. The POs' strong political will in making linkages and business ties with government agencies, NGOs, LGU and the private sector provided the members short-term employment and livelihood projects.

All the POs had achieved positive *environmental impacts* in the CBFM areas through a reduction of illegal logging activities and kaingin making. There was also increased productivity in the farmlands, improved water availability, increased forest rehabilitation, and reduced dependence of members on forest resources, particularly under the second chairmanship in all the three sites. Incidentally, these periods coincided with the peak of the promotion and implementation of the various people-oriented projects, a period when foreign- and NGO-assisted projects grew rapidly. However, advances in environmental management were offset to a degree by continued unsound practices such as kaingin farming and cross-contour corn farming in Salingdingan. Other indicators of slow progress are the small areas that have been planted to trees and maintained as forest areas (in Salingdingan), and that much illegal timber exploitation still occurs (Quibal). In VIBANARA, migrants continue to conduct illegal forest clearing activities, despite attempts by the community and the government to stop it.

PROBLEMS, ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The POs recognised the tremendous benefits gained by the implementation of CBFM in their localities. Nevertheless, a number of critical areas, limiting processes and mechanisms have affected the institutional viability of CBFM programs. These include the processes of affirmation of the Resource Use Plan and the Annual Work Plan, the technical operations in Comprehensive Site Development, harvesting, determining individual property rights, education and training, and enterprise development. CBFM communities typically lack a stable socio-economic base and institutional partnership for social services, and contain a diverse range of subsistence and income earning members. Although they recognise the need to conserve biodiversity and other life-support systems, they continue to exploit community resources as if these are 'free'.

POs frequently experienced delays in implementation of their project activities due to voluminous documentation requirements and lengthy processing times for the issuing of their RUP and Community Resource Management Framework. A heavy financial burden is involved in 'follow-ups', with DENR personnel sometimes requiring additional payments. The (nation-wide) suspension order for harvesting caused much loss to one PO.

Lack of transparency and accountability between and within POs, the DENR and NGOs caused distrust which exacerbated management conflicts, with many members losing interest in project activities. One of the causes has been the short-term nature of cash-driven activities including reforestation, agroforestry development and timber stand improvement. Another reason has been the poor support system from government law-enforcement agencies including the DENR, military and LGU. At times of critical situations, such as in encounters with illegal loggers, these agencies have been slow to support the interests of the POs. Furthermore, the POs perceive a lack of DENR technical assistance in overcoming their lack of technical and social skills in implementing CBFM projects. POs believe issuing of cutting permits, and requests for AWP, could be processed in a much shorter time if there was a sense of urgency and real commitment in DENR.

Lack of an equitable benefit-sharing scheme is also considered a major problem. The respondents recognised the immeasurable value and gains they can take from the forest resources awarded to them. However, they believed they could not avail of such benefits if access is being controlled by the DENR, and perceived that they do not obtain a fair share of benefits in their institutional partnerships. They cited some cases where the PO had to spend much money, time and effort in the preparation of the requirements but to no avail. Furthermore, they admitted that equity is lacking even within their own organisation.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

CBFM is a people-oriented strategy, one of the major principles of which is 'people participation', wherein its activities are community-driven. CBFM is not yet consistent with the global paradigm of sustainable development, the approach being more one of conventional forestry focused primarily on hard technology with soft technology as the secondary objective. *Productivity* (economic sustainability) and

stability (environmental sustainability) are taken as the priority conditions to be achieved and *social equity* (social sustainability) as the enabling condition towards sustainable development. In fact, the improvement in living standard of POs appears to have been quite limited.

There is a need to reduce the volume of documentation⁹ and to modify annual work plans so that they cover a longer term, such as three to five years, but with annual accomplishment reports as a performance check. The DENR's way of correcting non-compliance by POs is still the traditional *punitive* way. Holding permits in abeyance means a complete cut-off in operations, which is tantamount to the cut-off of the PO households' subsistence. There is a need for PO training in conflict management, use of computer-based geographic and management information systems (GIS/MIS), social and business negotiations, skills in resource production and utilisation, and enterprise development. Local knowledge of the PO should be recognised, for example in choice of species to be planted in a particular development area.

CBFM as practiced in the three study sites does not yet exist as originally envisaged. The number of PO members in each of the three sites is not large enough (only 5-10% of the households) to represent the communities, and the number of active members is too small, being usually restricted to the set of officer bearers. The major activities undertaken were not community-driven but rather DENR/NGO or donor-driven. The functions of the POs as *de facto* forest managers are limited; DENR representatives seem not to be willing to relinquish their role in the management of the forest resources. The instrument for harvesting of areas of land held under Individual Property Rights (IPR) is faulty because the permits issued actually enhance illegal logging.

Summing up all the issues, problems and concerns discussed, the major issue at stake is the conflicting interests of the various groups and institutional partners. Therefore, there is a need for the decision-makers to be more frequently in the field to consider the interface between what is ideal and what is real before decisions are made. As partners in development, the stakeholders must face the great challenge for them to direct their varied roles and interests in an orchestrated manner so as to be more effective in empowering the local forest communities or the POs (as the *de facto managers*) in managing forest resources.

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